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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0389  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 6467  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 001104

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CHANGED TITLE OF CLAUDIA SORIO)

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/ESC, WHA/EPSC, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN  
STATE FOR D, E, P, AND WHA  
TREASURY FOR JHOEK  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAM  
NSC FOR DAN FISK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [PINR](#) [VE](#) [HQ](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAS: FIRST OFFICIAL BOLIVARIAN CIRCLE MEETS  
(CORRECTED COPY)

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1026 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: CDA James Williard for reasons 1.5 (b, d)

11. (U) According to press reports, on June 14 Honduras hosted its first official Bolivarian circle (a grass-roots mobilization effort originally created to support Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's "Bolivarian Revolution.") Television coverage of the event appeared to show 30-50 people in attendance, in a room heavily decorated with posters of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. One participant interviewed said that the meeting was a good way to learn about the "great thinkers" about whom the Honduran school system does not teach.

12. (U) In attendance at the event were Cuban Ambassador to Honduras Elis Alberto Gonzalez Polanco and Venezuelan Charge d'Affaires in Honduras Claudio Sorio. Gonzalez said the group "urgently demands social justice. The people need to resolve the problems and the enormous social debt that has accumulated as a result of a savage neo-liberalism that is condemned everywhere in the world, including by Pope John Paul II." In a separate interview conducted in his office, GOH Minister of Government and Justice Jorge Arturo Reina said, "I believe there is a rebirth of Latin Americanism that has been strengthened by the fears in the United States and the wall the United States is building along the border with Mexico, but we are primarily 'Morazanistas'" (a reference to the 19th Century Honduran hero Francisco Morazan). It was not clear from the report whether Reina had attended the event.

13. (C) Comment: Cuban doctors assigned to Honduras and other such programs that proselytize for Cuba have long been an element of the Honduran political landscape, and Post has heard stories of small discussion sessions in homes intended to foment support for Castro and his views. Following the Cuban model for medical scholarships, governors of five departments also recently visited Venezuela to secure free eye treatment for kids and obtain scholarships for low-income Hondurans to study in Venezuela. A full-scale public rollout of a Bolivarian circle, however is something new, and is

perhaps a sign of the growing confidence of the left, as the Zelaya administration publicly signals a continuing warming of relations with Chavez. The impending GOH deal with PetroCaribe has not been finalized yet, but meetings such as this one illustrate Chavez's heightened profile in Honduras. (Note: PetroCaribe is a GOV-sponsored effort at gaining regional political influence by providing highly concessional financing for oil purchases. See reftels for GOH efforts to access this program, and Post efforts to sensitize the GOH to the risks involved. End Note.) End Comment.

WILLIARD